

REMARKS

In the Restriction Requirement dated May 20, 2009, the Patent Office alleges that the pending claims are directed to the following patentably distinct species:

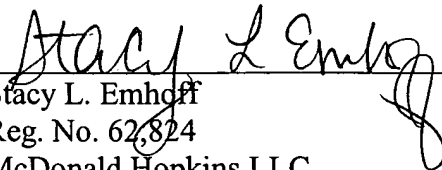
- I. Claims 1-12, 22-25, 29-30 drawn to a spreader structure having spreader rods with a region of reduced flexural strength; and
- II. Claims 13-21, drawn to a spreader having a filter membrane arranged between at least two spreader rods.

In response thereto, Applicants elect to prosecute species I – claims 1-12, 22-25, 29-30. Applicants have withdrawn claims 13-21, but respectfully requests in accordance with MPEP §821.04 that claims 13-21 are reexamined for rejoinder purposes upon issuance of a Notice of Allowance of claims 1-12, 22-25, 29-30. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request earnest examination of claims 1-12, 22-25, 29-30.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for examination and early allowance is earnestly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 6/22/09


Stacy L. Emhoff
Reg. No. 62,824
McDonald Hopkins LLC
600 Superior Avenue, E.
Suite 2100
Cleveland, OH 44114-2653
(216) 348-5774